AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (currently amended) A method for automatically managing energy cost using metering data and pricing data, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a customer's metering data from a utility meter, wherein the metering data is electronically transmitted from the utility meter;

receiving pricing data from a plurality of sources of power electronically over a network, wherein the pricing data is received electronically over a network associated with a plurality of sources of power;

forecasting a forecast load based on the received metering data from the utility meter, wherein said forecasting includes the steps of creating a current load shape from said metering data, and comparing the current load shape to a load shape from a prior time period based on historical data;

determining a price baseline for a combination of the plurality of the sources of power, wherein the price baseline is determined by price point data for the plurality of sources of power, the forecast load and a percentage of the forecast load which will be met by each of the plurality of sources of power;

determining an optimal consumption decision based on the received pricing data and the forecast load, wherein the consumption decision selects [[one]] at least two of the plurality of sources of power to thereby reduce utility costs, and wherein said optimal consumption decision is calculated using an optimal cost curve derived from an optimization algorithm applied to the pricing data and the forecast load and derives a percentage of the forecast load that will be met by each of the plurality of sources of power;

determining a price baseline for a combination of the plurality of the sources of power, wherein the price baseline is determined by price point data for the plurality of sources of power, the forecast load and a percentage of the forecast load which will be met by each of the plurality of sources of power; and

delivering the optimal consumption decision to the customer via the network.

Claim 2. (canceled)

Claim 3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the utility meter comprises an electric meter.

Claim 4. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the utility meter comprises a gas meter.

Claim 5. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the utility meter comprises a water meter.

Claim 6. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the metering data is electronically transmitted from the utility meter via a telephone line.

Claim 7. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the pricing data includes grid price point data, distributed generation price point data, demand-side management price point data and alternative fuel price point data.

Claim 8. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the network is the Internet.

Claim 9. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising determining a price baseline for at least one of the plurality of the sources of power, as a function of the forecast load and of price point data for the at least one of the plurality of sources of power.

Claim 10. (canceled)

Claim 11. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein the forecasting step further comprises receiving <u>additional forecasting data, such as</u> weather data and forecasting a forecast load based on the received metering data from the utility meter and the weather data.

Claim 12. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the determining step further comprises receiving financial market data and determining an optimal consumption

decision based on the received pricing data, the forecast load and the financial market data.

Claim 13. (currently amended) The method of ~~claim 1~~ claim 11, wherein the additional forecasting data is received via the Internet.

Claim 14. (currently amended) The method of ~~claim 1~~ claim 11, wherein the optimal consumption decision is further based, in part, on the additional forecasting data.

Claims 15-17. (canceled)

Claim 18. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, further including allowing the customer to choose to receive power ~~form~~ from one or more of the plurality of sources of power.

Claim 19. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further including electronically delivering a bill for power from one or more utilities to the customer.

Claim 20. (previously presented) The method of clam 19, further including allowing the customer to pay the bill electronically.

Claim 21. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further including automatically implementing the optimal consumption decision, wherein the automatically implementing includes automatically providing power from at least one of the plurality of sources of power to the customer based upon the optimal consumption decision.

Claims 22-42. (canceled)

Claim 43. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of implementing a feedback system for optimally meeting an actual load when the actual load deviates from the forecasted load.

Claim 44. (currently amended) A system for managing energy cost, comprising:

a server communicating with at least one utility meter, wherein said server is configured to record metering data received from said utility meter via a network, forecast a forecast load based on the received metering data from the utility meter, create a current load shape from said metering data, and compare the current load shape to a load shape from a prior time period based on historical data;

wherein the server is further configured to receive pricing data from a plurality of sources of power from the network, determine an optimal consumption decision, and determine a price baseline for a combination of at least two of the plurality of sources of power from price point data of the plurality of sources of power received over the network, the forecast load and a percentage of the forecast load which will be met by each of the plurality of sources of power; and

wherein the server is further configured to deliver the optimal consumption decision to a customer over the network.

Claim 45. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the at least one utility meter comprises an electric meter.

Claim 46. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the at least one utility meter comprises a gas meter.

Claim 47. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the at least one utility meter comprises a water meter.

Claim 48. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the metering data is electronically transmitted from the utility meter via a telephone line.

Claim 49. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the pricing data includes grid price point data, distributed generation price point data, demand-side management price point data and alternative fuel price point data.

Claim 50. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the server comprises at least one central server communicatively linked to at least one regional server.

Claim 51. (previously presented) The system of claim 50, wherein the at least one central server is configured to receive the pricing data from the network, receive the metering data from the at least one regional server, determine the optimal consumption decision and transmit the optimal consumption decision to the at least one regional server.

Claim 52. (currently amended) The system of claim 50, wherein the at least one regional server is configured to receive the metering data from the at least one utility meter, transmit the metering data to the at least one central server, receive the optimal consumption decision from [[he]] the at [[lest]] least one central server and transmit the optimal consumption decision to the customer.

Claim 53. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the network comprises the Internet.

Claim 54. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the network comprises a wide area network.

Claim 55. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, further including allowing the customer to choose to receive power from one or more of the plurality of sources of power.

Claim 56. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the forecast of a forecast load further comprises receiving additional forecasting data, such as weather data and forecasting a forecast load based on the received metering data from the utility meter and the weather data.

Claim 57. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, wherein the optimal consumption determination further comprises receiving financial market data and determining an optimal consumption decision based on the received pricing data, the forecast load and the

financial market data.

Claim 58. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, further including automatically implementing the optimal consumption decision, wherein the automatically implementing includes automatically providing power from at least one of the plurality of sources of power to the customer based upon the optimal consumption decision.

Claim 59. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, further including electronically delivering a bill for power from one or more utilities to the customer.

Claim 60. (previously presented) The system of claim 59, further including allowing the customer to pay the bill electronically.

Claim 61. (previously presented) The system of claim 44, further comprising a feedback system that is implemented for optimally meeting an actual load when the actual load deviates from the forecasted load.